

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION
Inquiry into the potential environmental
contribution of recreational hunting systems**

Closing date for submissions
Friday 28th March 2014



Submitters Name and Address
Cyndi Mulders

Signature

Date:
2014.03.27
14:14:51 +08'00'

TERMS OF REFERENCE

That the Council -

- (a) acknowledges the use in other States of regulated, licensed recreation hunting systems and the potential environmental contribution made in controlling pest animals on public lands, together with the possible economic, cultural and recreational benefits to the community; and
- (b) directs that -
 - (i) the Public Administration Committee inquire into the benefits or otherwise of a similar system being adopted in Western Australia and report back to the House by 4 December 2014; and
 - (ii) Hon Rick Mazza be co-opted as a member to the Public Administration Committee for the purposes of the foregoing inquiry.

SUBMISSION

I am an Environmental Consultant and Compliance Consultant who is also engaged by clients for feral animal control. My previous employment experience also includes Department of Agriculture and Food Biosecurity Officer, Shire Environment Officer, Ranger and Animal Welfare Inspector in the WA Wheatbelt. I am also a licensed sporting shooter and carry out feral animal control with firearms. In all of my working positions I have had cause to use firearms whether for feral animal control or in the carrying out of ranger and animal welfare duties.

During my working career I have seen the devastation caused by feral (pest) animals, primarily foxes, rabbits, wild dogs, feral cats, pigs, goats and camels, both on private and public lands including Nature Reserves and National Parks. As a Biosecurity Officer with the Department of Agriculture and Food I was involved in baiting programmes for foxes and rabbits and was trained in trapping and baiting of wild dogs and pigs. While these methods are relatively effective, there is the potential for native animals to be caught in traps and for birds to pick up baits and drop in areas accessed by domestic pets and even children.

In large areas of public lands if baiting and trapping is utilised it is necessary to ensure that people are fully aware that it is being undertaken. The same is required if recreational shooting is allowed to be conducted. This can be simply achieved by signage advising that hunting is undertaken in these areas. A regulated permit method would assist in controlling and managing recreational hunting in these areas.

Allowing regulated and licensed recreational hunting on public lands will assist in reducing and controlling pest animals which will help in bringing vulnerable native species back from the brink of po-

tential future extinction. This will also provide a legalised recreational pursuit that would reduce the incidence of unlicensed unregulated individuals shooting on public lands which no doubt currently happens.

There has been documented evidence showing that feral pigs trapped north of Perth have DNA which can be traced back to domestic pigs down south. The only explanation is that pigs have been deliberately let loose in National Parks so that illegal hunting can be carried out. Having a regulated, licensed recreational hunting system may assist in alleviating these types of situations.

The economic benefits include an increase in the local economy close to the public recreational hunting areas as local businesses including Bed and Breakfasts, motels and food outlets would be utilised by out of town people there to hunt. The economical benefits would also be passed onto farming communities as better control of pest animals on public lands would mean less pest animals on farming lands. At the moment farmers are able to shoot pest animals on their own properties but not on neighbouring public lands.

Experienced sporting shooters are compassionate humane recreational shooters who do not leave animals to suffer. Their aim is for a clean humane kill so that the animal does not suffer. An animal caught in a trap or baited suffers more than an animal which is shot with a clean kill. Even soft jaw traps can result in a broken leg causing suffering until someone checks on the trap and it is non-specific catching native and pest animals.

Native animals are generally less susceptible to 1080 (Sodium fluoroacetate) baits due to the compound being naturally occurring in some Australian native plants. However that can also mean that areas which do not have an abundance of these native plants occurring, have native animals that are susceptible.

Recreational hunting of pest animals by responsible licensed shooters is specific and will not negatively affect native animals. It is the opposite in that it will only have a positive effect on the environment and the protection of native species.